

Message Text

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41

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1343

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE RABAT 1006

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, MO, US

SUBJ: BENHIMA VISIT

REF: STATE 046797

1. BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES MEMBERS BENHIMA MISSION FOLLOW.

2. MUSTAPHA FARIS WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 17, 1931 IN CASABLANCA. HE ATTENDED UNIVERSITY OF PARIS FROM 1951 TO 1956, RECEIVING DEGREE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING. HE THEN WORKED FOR MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS UNTIL 1969, WHERE HE HELD INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT POSITIONS INCLUDING CHIEF OF CABINET TO MINISTER, INSPECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL IRRIGATION OFFICE AND DIRECTOR OF HYDRAULIC DEPARTMENT. IN 1969, HE WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PLANNING, IN 1971 SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FINANCE AND IN APRIL 1972 MINISTER OF FINANCE. HE HELD MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO ONLY BRIEFLY, BECOMING PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK, HIS PRESENT POSITION, IN DECEMBER OF SAME YEAR. FARIS WAS WOUNDED DURING AUGUST 16, 1972 COUP ATTEMPT ATTACK ON RABAT/SALE AIRPORT. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH ONLY POORLY. HE WAS LEADER GRANT NOMINEE IN 1957, BUT COULD NOT GO.

3. TAIEB BENCHEIKH WAS BORN AT ZOUMI NEAR MEKNES IN 1938. HE IS MARRIED WITH TWO YOUNG CHILDREN. HE HAS DEGREE FROM NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS IN PARIS. BEFORE TAKING UP PRESENT POSITION AS DIRECTOR ECONOMIC STUDIES IN PLANNING OFFICE (EFFECTIVELY NUMBER TWO JOB IN PLANNING SETUP), HE WAS DIRECTOR

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OF STATISTICS THERE STARTING IN 1966. HE HAS NEVER BEEN TO U.S.

BUT HAS BEEN LEARNING ENGLISH IN RECENT MONTHS. BENCHEIKH KNOWS MORE ABOUT DETAILS OF FIVE YEAR PLAN THAN ANYONE IN GOM, HAVING HAMMERED OUT VARIOUS CHAPTERS IN LONG SERIES OF INTERAGENCY MEETINGS.

4. OTHMAN SLIMANI, WHO WAS BORN IN FES IN 1941, IS MARRIED BUT HAS NOT CHILDREN. HE STUDIES LAW AND ECONOMICS IN RABAT AND PARIS AND HAS A DEGREE IN ECONOMICS. SINCE GRADUATION, HE HAS BEEN WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE WHERE HE WAS MEMBER OF MINISTER'S PERSONAL STAFF AND DIRECTOR OF URBAN TAXATION BEFORE ASSUMING PRESENT ROLE AS DIRECTOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. HE IS ALSO PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT MOROCCAN SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION. HE WAS IN U.S. FOR SIX MONTHS IN 1969/70 AS TRAINEE WITH IMF AND SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH.

5. LHASSAN BELKOURA (NOTE SPELLING) WAS BORN IN MEKNES IN 1948 AND IS BACHELOR. HE HAS DEGREE IN ECONOMICS FROM UNIVERSITY OF RABAT. HIS WORK EXPERIENCE TO DATE HAS ALL BEEN IN OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER'S ECONOMIC ADVISER WHERE HE IS IN CHARGE OF MULTILATERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH IBRD. HE HAS BEEN IN U.S. THREE TIMES IN 1972 AND 1973 TO ATTEND WORLD BANK AND IMF MEETINGS. HE SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH.

6. SAMIR GIBARA (NOTE SPELLING) WAS BORN IN CAIRO IN 1939. MARRIED BUT WITH NO CHILDREN, HE PRESENTLY HAS DUAL LEBANESE/FRENCH NATIONALITY. HE HAS, HOWEVER, APPLIED FOR AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP WHICH HE EXPECTS TO RECEIVE IN DECEMBER 1974. SINCE GRADUATION FROM HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL WITH AN MBA, HE HAS WORKED FOR GOODYEAR IN U.S., FRANCE, BELGIUM AND MOROCCO. HE IS NOW FINANCIAL DIRECTOR OF GOODYEAR MOROCCO. HE SPEAKS PERFECT ENGLISH WITH SLIGHT ACCENT.

7. FYI. HAVING HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH ALL ITS MEMBERS EXCEPT BELKOURA, WE CONSIDER DELEGATION TO BE STRONG ONE. IN CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN, ALL MEMBERS WILL DRAW ON DOSSIERS, PREPARED BY OFFICE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AT OUR SUGGESTION, GIVING SPECIFIC DETAILS ON EIGHT SECTORS WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AS MOST PROMISING FOR U.S. INVESTMENT. GIBARA IS PROBABLY MOST QUALIFIED TO TALK ABOUT SUBCONTRACTING IN AUTO PARTS. OTHERWISE IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISCERN PARTICULAR TYPES OF FIRMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO WHICH MEMBERS SHOULD BE DIRECTED.

8. WE FOUND APPOINTMENT OF GIBARA SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. PRESUMABLY, GOM FELT THAT ADDITION ONE MEMBER AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY WOULD STRENGTHEN MISSION'S CREDIBILITY. GOODYEAR'S RELATIONS WITH GOM HAVE IMPROVED IN RECENT MONTHS BUT COMPANY IS STILL WORKING ON PROBLEMS SUCH AS REQUEST FOR PRICE INCREASE. (GOODYEAR ASKED FOR 16 PERCENT BUT ONLY RECIEVED 10.) IT THEREFORE WAS WORRIED THAT

GIBARA'S PARTICIPATION IN MISSION COULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY
OTHER AMERICAN FIRMS AS DENOTING OUTRIGHT APPROVAL OF ALL GOM
POLICIES TOWARD U.S. BUSINESS. AFTER CHECKING WITH AKRON, HOWEVER,
IT AGREED TO LET GIBARA GO.
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